

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:15 a.m. on June 13 in Rome, Italy, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on June 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 6-

hour time difference, the address was broadcast after the President's news conference in Paris, France. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Interview With Ned Temko of the Observer in Rome, Italy June 13, 2008

Progress in Iraq/Remarks to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, France

Mr. Temko. You're giving a major speech in Paris in a few hours' time on what you describe as a new era of transatlantic union. And obviously, the picture in Europe is much more encouraging, it would seem, than a few years ago. What's changed, in your view, and what needs to be fixed?

The President. This is the—what's changed is the—we've gone beyond the Iraq period for two reasons. One is that Iraq is—democracy is succeeding. People are beginning to see progress. And therefore, people that—at least governments that felt like they didn't want to participate in the liberation of Iraq have now wanted to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq. And their people are beginning to see some success. Maliki has moved things—Stockholm—and comports himself like a leader would, and he speaks hopefully about the future.

Secondly, that there are a lot of issues that we're focused on that kind of send a signal that cooperation is necessary to change the conditions of the world for the better—cooperation on AIDS, cooperation on malaria, cooperation on trade, hopefully, discussion about climate change, cooperation in Afghanistan. In other words, the agenda is varied, and it's profound.

And my speech basically says that by focusing on these issues and by working together in a unified way, we can be trans-

formative, just like we were in the past. Europe used to be inward looking right after World War II—necessarily so—to rebuild. America helped. Now we can be outward looking as we help others.

I also have a—I'm a believer that liberty is transformative—the power of liberty is universal, that moral relativism must be rejected, and that we've got to have confidence in liberty to help others so that we're more secure ourselves. And that's what the speech is. It's a hopeful speech.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Mr. Temko. And one of the areas of Europe where liberty has been sort of partly transformative is clearly post-Soviet Russia. And you've had very strong personal relationship with Putin. First of all, is your assessment that Putin is still basically in charge? And how important is your personal relationship?

The President. Let me start with the second. My personal relationship is important because we had differences. And therefore, if you work hard to establish a relationship of trust, that you're then able to air out your differences in a way that's respectful of the other person, and at the same time, find common ground.

One area of common ground that has really not been given much attention is Iran. I agreed that the Iranians should have—they have the sovereign right to have civilian nuclear power. Putin obviously believes they should; witness the cooperation

on Bushehr. We both agree, however, that they can't be trusted with the knowledge that comes from enrichment. And therefore, Putin suggested to the Iranians that Russia provide the enriched uranium necessary to run their fuel plant. I agree. And as I said yesterday in the press conference, that this really undermines the argument for the Iranians because if, in fact, their only focus is on civilian nuclear power, they readily accept the plant, the fuel, and the offer of Russia to pick up the spent fuel.

So there are areas where we cooperate, and there are areas where we have disagreements. And yet I believe the best foreign policy for the American President is to be in a position to earn the trust of those where there's not a hundred-percent agreement. And by the way, any American President will find out there's never a hundred-percent agreement, even with your closest friends.

Mr. Temko. I'm sure that's right. [Laughter]

The President. And so the first part of the question—yes, look, I think it's—I went to Sochi. Putin introduced me to Medvedev. And he, in not only his body language, but in his words to me—that Medvedev is going to be in charge of foreign policy. And their relationship is being sorted out, and the world is fascinated to watch what's happening. I think it's—I'll take him for his word, and then we'll watch and see what happens.

Religious Freedom

Mr. Temko. How concerned are you about issues like human rights in Russia? And what degree of influence does any outside country—even the United States or—

The President. Oh, I think it matters. I think it matters when people speak up, whether it be in Russia or China or anywhere else. In Russia's case, there was—early on in my Presidency, I remember talking to Vladimir Putin on behalf of the Catholic Church, where there were con-

cerns about the Church being able to have a robust presence.

Vladimir Putin is sensitive to religious issues. He's a religious guy himself. He has a beautiful little Orthodox church on his own property, which he proudly showed me and Laura one time. He made sure I met some of the Jewish community when I was there in Russia. And so he is sensitive to religious liberty, more so than some other countries.

Natural Resources/Multilateral Relations

Mr. Temko. And is Western leverage reduced by the fact that Russia has a good chunk of the world's natural energy resources?

The President. I think it certainly changes the equation on a lot of foreign policy. It's interesting to watch the European Union wrestle with energy independence. Early in my Presidency, nations were saying they were going to get rid of nuclear power. And I questioned them quietly, on an individual basis, about that decision, because if you get rid of one source of power, you have to find another source of power, unless, of course, you don't care whether your economy grows. Most leaders end up caring whether their economy grows.

So I predicted to some of these leaders that there would be an issue in terms of having a sole source supplier, particularly of natural gas from Russia. And now there's great consternation within the EU. And my only point is, is that this energy issue complicates a lot of foreign policy issues, including that between the EU and Russia, as well as that between the United States and Venezuela, or the world and Iran. And the question is, what do you do about it?

Energy Policy

Mr. Temko. Well, that was going to be my next question.

The President. What we need to do about it in the United States is to get this Democratically controlled Congress to allow us

to explore for oil and gas. We did an energy study when I first became President that predicted it would be an issue if we did not explore for oil and gas. And what people don't understand is hydrocarbons are necessary as we transition to a new era, based upon new technologies. But new technologies don't arrive overnight. I mean, they just don't suddenly appear. It takes time and money to develop these technologies. The world is in the process of doing that. The United States is spending a lot of money on research, both privately and publicly. Japan is as well.

And yet we forgot the notion of transitioning. And so we don't explore in ANWR, we don't explore for oil shale, we don't explore off the coast of America, and we should be.

Oil Prices/Upcoming Middle East Oil Summit

Mr. Temko. In terms of the oil price, which is obsessing most of the world now, is there anything individual governments can do, in your view?

The President. There's no magic wand. It took us a while to get to where we are; it's going to take us a while to get out of it. And the truth of the matter is that there's either got to be more supply or less demand. And demand doesn't decline overnight, although patterns and habits are beginning to change in the United States. You notice some of these car manufacturers are now announcing they're going to be manufacturing smaller automobiles.

I think that people have got to recognize that, I mean, our policy in America has been robust on the development of new technologies and weak on finding enough hydrocarbons so that we can become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

Mr. Temko. In terms of the short term, fixing the oil price——

The President. You mean the magic wand?

Mr. Temko. Yes.

The President. No, there's not one.

Mr. Temko. And in terms of these conferences, I notice there's going to be a conference in Jeddah, and your national security staff——

The President. That would be Hadley, the spokesman.

Mr. Temko. Yes, indeed—not unreasonably said that you would want to know what such a conference——

The President. I was asked this at a press conference last night. I said it's an interesting idea. Of course, I'm going to go home and take a look at what it all means, and I'll decide who's going to attend on our behalf. But if I might repeat, the solution to the price of hydrocarbons is either more hydrocarbons or less usage of hydrocarbons.

During my trips to the Middle East—I've got great relations with the leaders there, and I talked to King Abdallah about increasing the supply of oil, on the theory that if you harm your consumers with high price, they will find other ways to power their economies as quickly as possible. And secondly, he should not want to see kind of a worldwide contraction as a result of consumers spending money on energy that ends up overseas, as opposed to spending money on opportunities in their respective economies.

So I think people, if they take a sober look at the world's supply, there's just not a lot relative to demand.

One of the things that could help is that if some countries, big consumers of hydrocarbons stop subsidizing their populations so that there is a response to price on the demand side.

Iran

Mr. Temko. Iran has been very much on the agenda again, all this week——

The President. Yes, it is. It should be.

Mr. Temko. ——and should be. Ahmadi-nejad has all but said no to the latest incentive package. If that stands, what's the next step in your view?

The President. More sanctions. The next step is for the Europeans and the United States and Russia and China to understand diplomacy only works if there are consequences. And sometimes the world tends to focus on the process as opposed to the results. And I have tried during my Presidency to say, we need to focus on the results. And for diplomacy to be consequential, there has to be a statement that says to the Iranians: Here's your way forward; if you choose not to, there will be a consequence. And the consequence in this case, in the diplomatic channel, is sanctions that are effective. So we will work with our partners on implementation of the sanctions thus far in place through the U.N., and work with them on additional sanctions, including through the U.N. process, as well as through the financial process.

Mr. Temko. What's at stake here? Sorry, go on.

The President. On the theory that there are people inside Iran who, one, are suffering as a result of the decisions their Government made; but secondly, leaders inside of Iran who are sick and tired of the isolation brought about by this regime. In 2003, the Iranians had agreed to verifiably suspend; we had agreed to say, there's a way forward, working with our European partners. In other words, there was a—looked like a successful way forward for both sides of this debate. Then Ahmadi-nejad gets elected, changes the tone and changes the policy.

And so my only point there is that—and this is the point I make to our partners—is that the Iranians had adopted a different attitude during my Presidency—in other words, in the relatively near past—and that's not to say they can't do it again. And now is the time. And the consequences of Iran having a nuclear weapon are substantial. They're substantial in the Middle East. If the people in the Middle East do not think that the United States and Europe, for example, are going to work to provide security, they will find their own

ways to secure themselves. And what the Middle East does not need is a nuclear arms race. It does not need the instability that comes from an innate fear that the West is not strong enough or willing enough to take on the problem.

Situation in the Middle East

Mr. Temko. So there's a lot at stake here, in your view.

The President. In my judgment, it's the international issue that faces all of us. And therefore, success in Iraq is important; it has consequences for the Iranian issue. It is important for us to have security agreements with our friends. We, the United States, has security agreements with UAE, for example. When you go to the Middle East and you sit in my seat and listen, yes, there's concern about the Palestinian state. But the dialogue has shifted dramatically from solve the Palestinian state and you've solved the problems in the Middle East, to now solve the Iranian issue and you solve the problems in the Middle East.

Iran

Mr. Temko. Let's assume that Ahmadi-nejad does not respond to this latest package, that there are additional sanctions. You clearly feel very strongly about this issue.

The President. That's why I put all options on the table.

Mr. Temko. And there are other options, obviously. What happens if at the end of the year, you have tougher sanctions, but you still have no resolution?

The President. I don't want to speculate on that. My hope is, is that let's get the tough sanctions in place. That's the task.

Mr. Temko. But there's always an alternative on the table; there has to be.

The President. Oh, yes, absolutely.

Mr. Temko. And you—

The President. And alternatives not just for the United States, alternatives for a lot of other countries, some of which the world needs to think about as we head into this

arena. We don't want a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. That's an alternative.

U.S. Foreign Policy

Mr. Temko. But you would be willing to hand over a status quo which was slightly improved, i.e., tougher sanctions?

The President. Actually, it's not status quo because there's a multilateral forum in place that will enable Presidents to more likely deal with this issue.

I have made it clear that it's difficult for the United States to achieve an issue in a one-on-one situation with people like Ahmadi-nejad or Kim Jong Il. I have changed the foreign policy of the United States to make it more multilateral because I understand that diplomacy without consequences is ineffective. And the only way to achieve consequences through diplomacy is for there to be a universal application, in this case, of sanctions. Unilateral sanctions don't work.

You know, I tell my partners, we're asking you to sanction. I know you're sitting there saying to yourself, "Well, it's easy for him to say because they've already sanctioned." And the question facing countries is, does money trump effective diplomacy for the sake of peace and security?

Progress in Iraq

Mr. Temko. Iraq, you mentioned. Postsurge, are things heading in the right direction, in your view?

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. Temko. And how is—

The President. Violence is down. And as a result of violence being down, the economy is growing and political reconciliation is taking place. And the lesson learned in this postconflict period in both Iraq and Afghanistan is, you got to have security.

I gave a speech at the Air Force Academy that said it's a different set of issues that we face now than we faced 60 years ago in postconflict. First of all, the conflicts took longer to resolve in World War II, and yet the reconstruction was done in rel-

ative peace and security. Here it took little time to accomplish the initial military objective, and reconstruction had to be done in the face of a lot of violence.

And in 2006, it became apparent that our strategy of training and encouraging the Iraqis to take the lead was not working; sectarian violence was severe. As you know, I made the decision to send 30,000 more in because we recognized that—and had belief that security would yield this kind of evolution of democracy, and it is. The number of laws they passed, the Iraqi Parliament have passed, have been—I would say it certainly exceeded expectations. And they passed their budgets faster than we have passed our budgets.

British and U.S. Troop Levels in Iraq

Mr. Temko. I'm sure that's true. [*Laughter*]

The British Government, Gordon Brown had said yesterday, I think, that he will announce sometime in the coming weeks future plans for British deployment in Iraq. British officers have acknowledged that in the recent fighting in Basra, the American military role was crucial to making sure that there was a response. Is there not a concern that, whatever the justifications for a British withdrawal, that a British pullout of troops could have an effect either on American deployment or on the situation as a whole? Or are you relaxed about it?

The President. I'm, first of all, appreciative of the fact that Gordon Brown is constantly in dialogue with us about what he and his military are thinking. Secondly, we ourselves are bringing out troops based upon return on success. And thirdly, I am confident that he, like me, will listen to our commanders to make sure that the sacrifices that have gone forward won't be unraveled by drawdowns that may not be warranted at this point in time. I'm looking forward to discussing with him.

We've had some discussions. He was going to be at 3,500, I think, if I'm not mistaken; he's now at 5,000.

National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley. I think he's at 4,200.

The President. Forty-two-hundred, I don't know, whatever, but it's—

Mr. Temko. But it did roll back on an—

The President. It's greater than he thought, in other words—

Mr. Temko. Yes, that's right.

The President. In other words, the Government took a look and said, "Well, maybe we ought to leave more troops in." My only point is, is that timetables—you say, timetable for withdrawal, and our answer is, there should be no definitive timetable; there ought to be obviously a desire to reduce our presence, but it's got to be based upon success.

All I can tell you is, from my perspective, the British response has been that way. They've said, we're going to have—we think we'll be at 3,500, but then adjusted their plans based upon the conditions.

Iraq/President's Decisionmaking

Mr. Temko. Weapons of mass destruction in Iraq obviously is—

The President. Still looking for them.

Mr. Temko. Still looking for them, exactly. [Laughter]

The President. That was a huge disappointment.

Mr. Temko. And the obvious question your critics ask, particularly in Britain, is if we'd known at the time there weren't any WMD, would there have been this war?

The President. Well, you know, that's one of those great hypotheticals that we didn't know. Now having said that, I still strongly defend the decision. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. But Presidents don't get to do redos; they don't get to do look-backs, ifs. All I can tell you is, is that we thought for certain there was weapons of mass destruction, as did the nations that voted for 1441.

See, the interesting thing about history is that—short-term, kind of momentary his-

tory, is that people forget what life was like at the moment that this decision was made. One, people forget that we tried to solve this problem diplomatically. You might remember, there was a great debate: Will Bush go to the United Nations, or will they move without trying to solve this problem diplomatically? Well, we did go to the United Nations; I insisted we go to the United Nations. And we worked diligently from the summer of 2002 until March of 2003 to see if we couldn't have solved this. We went back to the United Nations for a resolution.

Mr. Temko. For a second resolution, yes.

The President. And in the meantime, we're working with our allies and friends. We didn't realize, nor did anybody else, that Saddam Hussein felt like he needed to play like he had weapons of mass destruction. It may have been, however, that in his mind all this was just a bluff. After all, there had been 17 United Nations Security Council resolutions, the world wasn't serious, which leads me back to the point that when the world says something, it better have—it better mean what it says, otherwise people who are destabilizing just don't take it seriously. "Who cares?" they say.

And so I was asked in Germany—one of the guys said, "You making any mistakes?" "Of course," I said. One of the mistakes was my language made it look like that I was anxious for war; that because of my language, I didn't understand the consequences. Well, of course I understand the consequences. And I understand better than anybody that the Commander in Chief has got an obligation to comfort those who have lost a loved one because of his decision. And then the man went on and said, "Well, was it a mistake to get rid of Saddam Hussein?" The answer is absolutely not.

President's Decisionmaking

Mr. Temko. You very movingly described in one interview this week that—how difficult it is to put young American men and women in harm's way and how much time and energy you've tried to devote to doing what you can, obviously, to comfort the families of someone who has been killed——

The President. And making sure they understand that the sacrifice won't go in vain. Nothing worse than a politician making decisions based upon the last Gallup poll when people's lives are at stake, or where they have made a sacrifice. And I tell these folks—and they want to know—look, there's a lot of them, and I haven't visited with all the families. But I will tell you this: Many, many families look at me trying to determine whether or not, one, I believed that it was necessary; and two, whether or not I'm going to let their son or daughter kind of lie in an empty grave when it comes to the sacrifice they made. They want to know whether or not the President—if he believes it was necessary, whether or not he's going to see this thing through, regardless of what they're screaming on the TV sets.

President's Image Abroad

Mr. Temko. You're flying into Britain where your public awaits you, and you know there's a tough public there sometimes. One of the questions——

The President. Do I care? Only to the extent that it affects people's view of my—the citizens I represent. Do I care about my personal standing? Not really.

*Iraqi Civilians/U.S. Military Casualties/
Freedom Agenda*

Mr. Temko. One of the questions, of course, they ask, is, do you feel a sense of personal pain——

The President. Course I do.

Mr. Temko. —over the Iraqi civilians who have——

The President. I feel a sense of pain for those who were tortured by Saddam Hussein, by the parents who watched their daughters raped by Saddam Hussein, by those innocent civilians who have been killed by inadvertent allied action, by those who have been bombed by suicide bombers. I feel a sense of pain for death. I feel a sense of pain for the families of our troops. I read about it every night, or I used to read about it every night. The violence has changed.

But I get a report every day about whether or not the U.S. has suffered casualties. And when I get those reports, I think about those mothers and fathers. And I meet with a lot of families—a lot—in order to be able to—it's my duty to try to console and comfort. And many times, the comforter in chief ends up being comforted, by the way, by the families, the strength of the families.

This is a volunteer army, and these kids are in this fight because they want to be in the fight. And they believe in it. And yet these poor parents are looking at—oftentimes looking at negativity, just people quick to report the ugly and the negative. But it's hard to report on the schools that are opening or the clinics that are opening or the playgrounds that are filling up. The society is coming back.

I have great faith in the power of liberty. First of all, I wasn't surprised when people went to vote in defiance of the killers. I was pleased, but not surprised, because I believe in the universality of freedom. I don't believe it is a Western value. And I say to people, I am concerned about the comfortable isolating themselves and saying, who cares whether somebody over there lives in a free society?

And I'll say in my speech, moral relativism must be challenged, this notion that it doesn't matter what forms of government are—I think it does matter. I think it also matters, along these lines, that when I talk about freedom, it's just not freedom from tyranny, it's freedom from HIV/AIDS; it's

freedom from malaria; it's freedom from hunger—for two reasons. One, it's in our national interests that we defeat hopelessness. The only way a suicide bomber can recruit is when he finds somebody hopeless. And secondly, it's in our moral interests. A nation is a better nation when it feeds the hungry and takes care of the diseased.

And therefore, when I go to the G-8, my message to the G-8 is, yes, we'll talk about the environment, and that's important. But George W. Bush is going to be talking about those people who are needlessly dying because of mosquito bites. And I expect them to honor their obligations. We came to the G-8 last year, and I said: "Why don't you match what the United States of America does? We're putting up \$30 billion for HIV/AIDS, \$1.6 billion for malaria. And why don't you match us?" And they said, "Okay."

And so we're going to go to the G-8 and we're going to sit down and say, "Have we matched?" Because there are people needlessly dying today. And we'll come up with a good solution for greenhouse gases by getting China and India at the table. And it's going to take time to evolve, but I'm going to remind people we can act today to save lives for the good of the world.

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino. Okay, we're about 25 minutes.

The President. That means shorten my answers.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

Mr. Temko. No, no, I'll shorten my questions. [Laughter]

Just three very brief questions. First of all, your relationship with Tony Blair—I'm struck, in your last question, that you seem to share with him a genuine passion for ideas and that politics matter. How would you describe your relationship with Blair?

The President. I would say, first of all, it's a relationship forged by fire. We

share—as you can tell, I have this idealistic streak, and so does Blair. But we also understand that this idealism is a practical response to the world. See, this is an—he understands, like I understand, this is an ideological struggle. These acts are not isolated acts of lawlessness. We're in a war.

A lot of people hope this wasn't the war—you know, just kind of dismiss it as, oh, there's some irritated guys, you know, just kind of making some moves. We viewed it as an ideological struggle that requires response through good intelligence, sometimes military, obviously, sometimes law enforcement, all aiming to dismantle and protect our people—dismantle the cells and protect our people, but that ultimately, freedom has to defeat the ideology of hate.

Mr. Temko. Was Tony Blair your poodle, to use the—

The President. You know, look, this is the convenient—one of the great things about Western press is that they oftentimes retreat to the convenient rather than trying to, you know, probe the depths of a relationship or the depths of somebody's feelings or the basis of philosophy. And so it's convenient. It's convenient to say, you know, "warmonger," "religious zealot," "poodle." I mean, these are just words that people love to toss around foolishly.

President's Legacy

Mr. Temko. How do you think and how do you hope that you and Blair—but particularly yourself—how would you hope that the achievement—what's your greatest achievement or your greatest pride as President? And what's your greatest regret?

The President. Well, first of all, just so you know, I'm not going to be around to see it. There's no such thing as objective short-term history. It takes a while for history to have it—you know, to be able to have enough time to look back to see why decisions were made and what their consequences were.

So you know, I'd hope it'd be somebody who would use the influence of the United

States to help transform societies by working on disease and hunger and freedom. And the liberation of 50 million people from the clutches of barbaric regimes is noteworthy, at the minimum.

President's Beliefs

Mr. Temko. Does this job take its toll on you? I mean, can you—

The President. My spirits are pretty high. I mean, I'm—you got to believe, you know? You got to have a set of beliefs that are the foundation for your very being. Otherwise these currents and tides and 24-hour news and politics will kind of leave you adrift. And I tell people that when I get home, I'm going to look in that mirror and say, I didn't sacrifice my core beliefs to satisfy critics or satisfy pundits or, you know—

President's Future

Mr. Temko. And what next—a foundation, a book?

The President. Yes, I'm going to think about that, yes—writing a book. I'm going to build a Presidential library with a freedom institute at SMU—Southern Methodist University—all aimed at promoting the universal values that need to be defended. I'm very worried about isolationism and protectionism. The world has gone through these “isms” before. And you watch and see, the protectionist debate is mounting in the United States; it's mounting in Europe, certainly. It was much easier to kind of blame the economic woes on external forces, and therefore, the response would be, okay, let's quit trade, let's make sure our jobs aren't going elsewhere, and that's—some of those concerns are legitimate.

On the other hand, it is a forerunner of isolationism, and you know, I remind people that we've been through a period of isolationism and protectionism right before World War II. And, by the way, curiously enough, at that period of time, there was nativism as well. And I find it interesting that the immigration debate is now

pretty pronounced around. And so I'm going to set up a—this isn't, like, you know, a headquarters for the Republican Party.

And by the way, just so you know, the foreign policy I've just outlined for you is—you know, it's not a hundred percent received amongst conservative thinkers in the United States either.

NBC's “The West Wing”

Mr. Temko. Yes, I know, yes. Do we have 90 seconds?

Ms. Perino. Yes.

Mr. Temko. Okay, so—

Ms. Perino. I would say 90 seconds.

Mr. Temko. Ninety seconds, okay. Just one very quick—this is going to seem slightly flippant, but you're going to the greatest fan club of “The West Wing” television show in the world on Sunday. Since you're the only person who can review that program from experience—

The President. I've never watched it.

Mr. Temko. You're kidding. Why not?

The President. Because I don't watch network TV. I read.

Mr. Temko. You read. Okay. And then the—

The President. I seriously don't watch TV. You know, I watch sports, but I'd much rather read books. And I do, I read a lot. I may even read yours. [Laughter]

Progress in Iraq

Mr. Temko. And then the last question—

The President. But I won't be able to find it because it's written by—so-called written by the other guy. [Laughter]

Q. Certainly true. Last question, which comes back to Iraq again. Gordon Brown—and I thought your question on the pain you feel personally was quite clear and absolutely strong. Gordon Brown a couple weeks ago phoned a voter who was upset about Iraq, and apologized on behalf of the Government, not for the war, which he still thinks was the right thing, but for

the kind of suffering of the Iraqi people. Do you think that's a wise thing to do?

The President. I think the Iraqi people—yes, some have suffered, no question. But they're living in a free society. Everybody is going to have to handle their own internal business the way they want to. I'm not going to second-guess one way or the other. But my view is, is that when you talk to Iraqis, they're thrilled with the idea of living in a free society. Do they like the fact that violence is still there? No. But every society reaches a level of violence that's tolerable.

And has that reached Iraq? I don't know yet. But I do know life is improving. I do know they live under a Government that they helped elect, or they elected. And there's still a lot of work to be done, don't get me wrong, but—and you know, the thing that people ought to focus on is the courage of the Iraqis. They put up with a lot of violence, Muslims killing Muslims. But first of all, there have been some accidents, but nobody can claim that the United States or Great Britain are intentionally killing innocent people. We're not. As a matter of fact, warfare has changed a lot.

Mr. Temko. But the existence of the war has led to the deaths of innocent people, and the fact is——

The President. It has, but before the war, hundreds of thousands were discovered in mass graves.

Freedom Agenda

Mr. Temko. So on balance, you have——

The President. Freedom trumps tyranny every time. And it's hard for people to see

that. It's hard for people sitting afar to say, "Isn't that beautiful, somebody lives in a free society?" And my point is, is that I think it's important for those of us who do live in free societies to understand that others want to live in free societies. And it takes time and sacrifice and effort to get that done. But one of the lessons of history is, is free societies yield of peace.

I remind people, 60 years ago isn't all that long. And to say that Europe would be whole, free, and at peace prior to the end of World War II would have been, you know, you would have been viewed as a hopeless idealist. Well, I'm making the point that I—when I gave my speech at the Knesset, if you read what I said, here's what 60 years from now the world can look like, and I believe will look like, unless we all retreat. It's not worth it, you know. And my point is, it's working.

Mr. Temko. Good. Thank you very much. And thank you for taking so much time.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 9:45 a.m. at the Villa Taverna. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin and President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia; King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 15. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks to Reporters in Paris, France June 15, 2008

Midwest Flooding/Father's Day

Laura and I had the joy of worshipping here in Paris.

My thoughts and prayers go out to those who are suffering from the floods in our country. I know there's a lot of people hurting right now, and I hope they're able

to find some strength in knowing that there is love from a higher being.

I also want to wish all the fathers in America happy Father's Day. So, Dad, if you're listening, happy Father's Day.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. at the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom in London, England June 16, 2008

Prime Minister Brown. I'm delighted to welcome President Bush and the First Lady back to London. And his visit today is an opportunity to celebrate the historic partnership of shared purpose that unites the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We both share a great love of history and about how we have forged the ideas of democracy and liberty over centuries. And the special partnership that President Bush and I both agree today is a partnership not just of governments but of peoples, is driven forward not simply by mutual interests but by our shared values. Both countries founded upon liberty, our histories forged through democracy. Our shared values expressed by a commitment to opportunity for all, putting into practice what Churchill called the "joint inheritance of the English-speaking world."

So let me thank President Bush for being a true friend of Britain and for the importance he attaches to enhancing our transatlantic partnership, from the work we do in Afghanistan and Iraq to every part of the world. And let me thank him for the steadfastness and the resolution that he has shown in rooting out terrorism in all parts

of the world; in working for a Middle East peace settlement; in bringing hope to Africa; in working for a free trade world where, in spite of today's current difficulties with oil and food prices, there is and should be a wider and deeper prosperity in future for all.

Now, in our substantive and wide-ranging talks last night and this morning, the President and I have discussed a number of central issues. We have discussed Iran's nuclear ambitions. We have discussed Iraq and Afghanistan, where our forces are working side by side. We have discussed the criminal cabal that now threatens to make a mockery of free and fair elections in Zimbabwe. We have discussed what we can do about democracy in Burma.

We have resolved, first of all, as we did some years ago, that it is in the British national interest to confront the Taliban in Afghanistan, or Afghanistan would come to us. And so today Britain will announce additional troops for Afghanistan, bringing our numbers in Afghanistan to the highest level. And let me thank our troops and the troops of America and 42 other countries who are in Afghanistan, as I thank